

# GERMAN CHRISTMAS MARKETS: THE REAL SPIRIT OF THE SEASON



Christmas is coming! No doubt about that as the stores fill with Christmas gifts, the ads become a bit more holiday like and talk of one special shopping day after the next fills the ears. If you want to get that old time Christmas spirit back go for a trip to the German Christmas market.

There are German Christmas markets all over Europe but you can't expect any of them to outdo the markets in Germany. The best of them were, are and will be in Germany. The German Christmas market tradition started in the early Middle Ages (think before Germany was even called Germany) and with the modern state divisions some are now located slightly beyond the German borders in German speaking Austria and Switzerland too. Even there you can expect the same classic set up. Wood huts, Christmas lights, traditional decorations and Germanic food and drink. Sure to warm the heart and soul!

Can you believe **there are well over 2,500 of these markets and they attract over 150 million visitors a year**? All this without losing a bit of their charm or appeal. If anything the more the years progress the more appeal the German Christmas markets gain! Little shops, handmade toys, trinkets and gifts. This may be big money (the German Christmas market makes around 5bn a year!) but they do it the right way without compromising a tad in spirit and quality.

Let's not forget the Germans near invented Christmas after all. Not in the religious sense of it, but certainly the seasonal fun like Christmas trees and advent calendars. The German market is certainly one place you get to revel with the Brothers Grimm with hardly a taste of Walt Disney or other overdone American influences at all. That's a good reason to celebrate too!

**Nutcrackers, Christmas carols, strong German beer.** We can't forget the fine treats for the kids either. Christmas at a German market first leaves you wondering why people didn't just stick with this winning model forever and second makes you thankful at least somewhere it's still in full force.

There's plenty of choices to make should you take the trip from the famous Erzgebirge mountains Christmas markets specializing in wood work to those of the Bavarian forests that have mastered glass gifts. Lots more too, but all hold something extra special and unique that you can certainly count on.

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